

Child and Family Services Policy Manual: Adoption Preparation

Purpose of Preparation

Preparation for adoptive placement is intended to help the child transition successfully to an adoptive home by:

- helping the child grieve the loss of birth parents and the fact that the child will not be returning to live with them;
- helping the child understand the differences between foster care and adoption and why adoption is the plan for the child;
- helping the child with the separation from the foster family (if the child will be adopted by a different family);
- ensuring that the child's transition to the adoptive home is planned and based on the child's individual needs; and
- protecting the child, as much as possible, from the emotional trauma associated with sudden separation from a known situation to an unknown situation.

Child Protection Specialist Responsibility

Preparation for adoptive placement is a team process involving the child's child protection specialist, foster parents, birth parents (if appropriate), adoptive parents and the family resource specialist. The child's child protection specialist is the person responsible for coordinating the preparation of the child for adoptive placement.

Preparation of Child

The child protection specialist can prepare the child by:

- informing the child of the placement plan (as appropriate for the child's age);
- working with the child to prepare or update his or her Life Story Book;
- helping the child to understand the reasons for the adoption;
- encouraging the child to talk about his or her feelings regarding the child's birth parents, foster parents and prospective adoptive parents; and
- arranging for the child to have a "good-bye" visit with the

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child's birth parent(s).

The child protection specialist can contact the family resource specialist or permanency planning specialist for resources to assist with the process of preparing the child.

If a child who is being placed for adoption will be moved to a new home, he or she will need to work through the resulting changes in relationships with the significant people in the child's life. These people may include birth parents, siblings, teachers, therapists, child protection specialist or others significant in the child's life. Although every effort should be made to continue relationships that are in the child's best interests, some changes may be unavoidable. In such situations, the child should be aided through the transition and the grieving process.

The child should have the opportunity to gradually become acquainted with the new parents. The placing child protection specialist, the family resource specialist for the adoptive family and the child's foster family can provide the child some continuity during the transition to the adoptive family.